



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District of Columbia Man Sentenced to Over Ten Years in Prison for Assaulting Five Victims with a Handgun and Subsequent Obstructionist Behavior

WASHINGTON - Robert Colbert, 27, of Southeast Washington, D.C., was sentenced today in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to more than ten years in prison, following his conviction for Assault with a Dangerous Weapon and related charges on November 16, 2009, in connection with his threat on five individuals with a handgun and assault of a Metropolitan Police Department officer as he was being taken into custody, U.S. Attorney Channing Phillips announced. The jury also found Colbert guilty of Contempt and Obstruction of Justice for sending a letter encouraging his wife to withhold truthful testimony in the proceeding in violation of a no-contact order.

According to evidence presented at trial, Colbert went to his estranged wife's home in the early morning hours of April 11, 2009. Colbert and his wife had a lengthy history of domestic violence, and had separated several months earlier. Colbert forced his way into the home and confronted his wife about her new boyfriend. Colbert, in a rage, then attempted to enter a back area of the home where the new boyfriend and another male had been sleeping. When a friend of the wife attempted to intervene, Colbert pulled a handgun out of his waistband and pointed it within inches of the friend's face. Colbert then struck the friend in the face with the handgun. Colbert's rage continued to escalate as he waved the gun in the air, and threatened to kill everyone in the home.

In response to the defendant's actions, the new boyfriend fled out of the back door of the home and flagged down Metropolitan Police Department Officer Peter Burggraf. At approximately the same time, two other witnesses fled the home, drove a few blocks, and flagged down a separate officer. Nearly simultaneously, police responded to the home in response to 911 calls from neighbors who heard the commotion. When Colbert heard the police outside the home, he fled out the back door. Moments later, Officer Burggraf spotted Colbert within blocks of the home and approached him. Colbert ran from Officer Burggraf, but fell to the ground a few blocks later, allowing Officer Burggraf to apprehend him. Other officers arrived on the scene

and attempted to take Colbert into custody. Colbert resisted arrest and attempted to kick Officer Thomas Caddell in the legs. Ultimately, the officers gained control of Colbert and placed him under arrest.

At his initial appearance in court, Colbert was detained pending trial and prohibited from having any contact with the victims, including his estranged wife. Over the next few months, Colbert sent two letters to his wife, in which he encouraged her to lie to the authorities and withhold testimony in the pending proceeding.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Phillips commended the investigative work of United States Attorney's Office Investigators Durand Odom and Tommy Miller, Metropolitan Police Department Detective Thomas Sepulveda, and Metropolitan Police Department Officers Peter Burggraf, Faraz Khan, Thomas Caddell, Jeffrey Newbold, Todd Korson, and Jeffrey Brown. He also commended the U.S. Attorney's Office staff that assisted in the successful prosecution of the case, including Paralegals Donhue Griffith and Joyce Arthur, Legal Assistant Etta Ford, Litigation Specialists Thomas Royal and Joshua Ellen, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Rich, who investigated and prosecuted the case at trial.

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